

§ 13942. Confidentiality of communications between sexual assault or domestic violence victims and their counselors

(a) Study and development of model legislation

The Attorney General shall—

(1) study and evaluate the manner in which the States have taken measures to protect the confidentiality of communications between sexual assault or domestic violence victims and their therapists or trained counselors;

(2) develop model legislation that will provide the maximum protection possible for the confidentiality of such communications, within any applicable constitutional limits, taking into account the following factors:

(A) the danger that counseling programs for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence will be unable to achieve their goal of helping victims recover from the trauma associated with these crimes if there is no assurance that the records of the counseling sessions will be kept confidential;

(B) consideration of the appropriateness of an absolute privilege for communications between victims of sexual assault or domestic violence and their therapists or trained counselors, in light of the likelihood that such an absolute privilege will provide the maximum guarantee of confidentiality but also in light of the possibility that such an absolute privilege may be held to violate the rights of criminal defendants under the Federal or State constitutions by denying them the opportunity to obtain exculpatory evidence and present it at trial; and

(C) consideration of what limitations on the disclosure of confidential communications between victims of these crimes and their counselors, short of an absolute privilege, are most likely to ensure that the counseling programs will not be undermined, and specifically whether no such disclosure should be allowed unless, at a minimum, there has been a particularized showing by a criminal defendant of a compelling need for records of such communications, and adequate procedural safeguards are in place to prevent unnecessary or damaging disclosures; and

(3) prepare and disseminate to State authorities the findings made and model legislation developed as a result of the study and evaluation.

(b) Report and recommendations

Not later than the date that is 1 year after September 13, 1994, the Attorney General shall report to the Congress—

(1) the findings of the study and the model legislation required by this section; and

(2) recommendations based on the findings on the need for and appropriateness of further action by the Federal Government.

(c) Review of Federal evidentiary rules

The Judicial Conference of the United States shall evaluate and report to Congress its views on whether the Federal Rules of Evidence should be amended, and if so, how they should be amended, to guarantee that the confidentiality

of communications between sexual assault victims and their therapists or trained counselors will be adequately protected in Federal court proceedings.

(Pub. L. 103-322, title IV, §40153, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1921.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Rules of Evidence, referred to in subsec. (c), are set out in the Appendix to Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

§ 13943. Information programs

The Attorney General shall compile information regarding sex offender treatment programs and ensure that information regarding community treatment programs in the community into which a convicted sex offender is released is made available to each person serving a sentence of imprisonment in a Federal penal or correctional institution for a commission of an offense under chapter 109A of title 18 or for the commission of a similar offense, including halfway houses and psychiatric institutions.

(Pub. L. 103-322, title IV, §40154, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1922.)

PART B—SAFE HOMES FOR WOMEN

SUBPART 1—CONFIDENTIALITY FOR ABUSED PERSONS

§ 13951. Confidentiality of abused person's address

(a) Regulations

Not later than 90 days after September 13, 1994, the United States Postal Service shall promulgate regulations to secure the confidentiality of domestic violence shelters and abused persons' addresses.

(b) Requirements

The regulations under subsection (a) shall require—

(1) in the case of an individual, the presentation to an appropriate postal official of a valid, outstanding protection order; and

(2) in the case of a domestic violence shelter, the presentation to an appropriate postal authority of proof from a State domestic violence coalition that meets the requirements of section 10410¹ of this title verifying that the organization is a domestic violence shelter.

(c) Disclosure for certain purposes

The regulations under subsection (a) shall not prohibit the disclosure of addresses to State or Federal agencies for legitimate law enforcement or other governmental purposes.

(d) Existing compilations

Compilations of addresses existing at the time at which order is presented to an appropriate postal official shall be excluded from the scope of the regulations under subsection (a).

(Pub. L. 103-322, title IV, §40281, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1938.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 10410 of this title, referred to in subsec. (b)(2), was generally amended by Pub. L. 111-320, title II, §201,

¹ See References in Text note below.

Dec. 20, 2010, 124 Stat. 3497, and, as so amended, no longer contains provisions relating to grants for State domestic violence coalitions. See section 10411 of this title.

SUBPART 2—DATA AND RESEARCH

§ 13961. Research agenda

(a) Request for contract

The Attorney General shall request the National Academy of Sciences, through its National Research Council, to enter into a contract to develop a research agenda to increase the understanding and control of violence against women, including rape and domestic violence. In furtherance of the contract, the National Academy shall convene a panel of nationally recognized experts on violence against women, in the fields of law, medicine, criminal justice, and direct services to victims and experts on domestic violence in diverse, ethnic, social, and language minority communities and the social sciences. In setting the agenda, the Academy shall focus primarily on preventive, educative, social, and legal strategies, including addressing the needs of underserved populations.

(b) Declination of request

If the National Academy of Sciences declines to conduct the study and develop a research agenda, it shall recommend a nonprofit private entity that is qualified to conduct such a study. In that case, the Attorney General shall carry out subsection (a) through the nonprofit private entity recommended by the Academy. In either case, whether the study is conducted by the National Academy of Sciences or by the nonprofit group it recommends, the funds for the contract shall be made available from sums appropriated for the conduct of research by the National Institute of Justice.

(c) Report

The Attorney General shall ensure that no later than 1 year after September 13, 1994, the study required under subsection (a) is completed and a report describing the findings made is submitted to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

(Pub. L. 103-322, title IV, § 40291, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1939.)

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AGENDA IDENTIFIED BY
THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT OF 1994

Pub. L. 106-386, div. B, title IV, § 1404, Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1514, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall—

“(1) direct the National Institute of Justice, in consultation and coordination with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Academy of Sciences, through its National Research Council, to develop a research agenda based on the recommendations contained in the report entitled ‘Understanding Violence Against Women’ of the National Academy of Sciences; and

“(2) not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 28, 2000], in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, submit to Congress a report which shall include—

“(A) a description of the research agenda developed under paragraph (1) and a plan to implement that agenda; and

“(B) recommendations for priorities in carrying out that agenda to most effectively advance knowledge about and means by which to prevent or reduce violence against women.

“(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.”

§ 13962. State databases

(a) In general

The Attorney General shall study and report to the States and to Congress on how the States may collect centralized databases on the incidence of sexual and domestic violence offenses within a State.

(b) Consultation

In conducting its study, the Attorney General shall consult persons expert in the collection of criminal justice data, State statistical administrators, law enforcement personnel, and nonprofit nongovernmental agencies that provide direct services to victims of domestic violence. The final report shall set forth the views of the persons consulted on the recommendations.

(c) Report

The Attorney General shall ensure that no later than 1 year after September 13, 1994, the study required under subsection (a) is completed and a report describing the findings made is submitted to the Committees on the Judiciary of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(d) Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$200,000 for fiscal year 1996.

(Pub. L. 103-322, title IV, § 40292, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1939.)

§ 13963. Number and cost of injuries

(a) Study

The Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Centers for Disease Control Injury Control Division, shall conduct a study to obtain a national projection of the incidence of injuries resulting from domestic violence, the cost of injuries to health care facilities, and recommend health care strategies for reducing the incidence and cost of such injuries.

(b) Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—\$100,000 for fiscal year 1996.

(Pub. L. 103-322, title IV, § 40293, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1940.)

CHANGE OF NAME

Centers for Disease Control changed to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by Pub. L. 102-531, title III, § 312, Oct. 27, 1992, 106 Stat. 3504.

SUBPART 3—RURAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
CHILD ABUSE ENFORCEMENT

§ 13971. Rural domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse enforcement assistance

(a) Purposes

The purposes of this section are—